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MY GRANDMOTHER'S PORTFOLIO.

No. III.

FRIENDSHIP.

And what is friendship but a name;
A charm that lulls to sleep;
A shade that follows wealth and fame,
But leaves the wretch to weep?—GOLDSMITH.

THE pathetic complaint contained in these lines, has been breathed by every mind of sensibility, as well as by the humble and desponding lover of Angelina; nor is it confined to minds of this description only, or to days of delicate refinement; men in all ages, of every country, and of various dispositions, have echoed the same sentiment. In each extremity of the globe,—in those cold regions where winter reigns with almost unceasing sway, chilling every gentle feeling of the heart; as well as in the more genial climes and fertile vales, where the rich and varied landscape expands the soul with benevolence, and the music of every grove softens it to sympathy,—friendship has been a universal sentiment, and its faithlessness a constant subject of lamentation. Even the savage has some welcome assistant in forming his canoe; some favourite companion in the chase: but in his situation, the subjects of rivalry are few, and the pangs of disappointment feebly felt. It is in more polished society that the divine sympathies of friendship are coeval with the first dawnings of reason, the first glow of sensibility; and its decay or its treachery is wounding to the heart. The female mind is allowed to be most susceptible of this attachment, both from its inherent delicacy and dependance, and from the greater similarity of situation and pursuit among the gentler sex. The men that cherish this sentiment most, are generally those whose education approaches nearest to that of females, who pass their youth in domestic life, and whose occupations are of a sedentary nature.

A friend, in the full sense of the term, is what very few are destined to possess. The character implies affection and esteem for the virtues and excellencies which may belong to us; discernment and courage to point out the errors to which we are subject, without shrinking from the averted look and tart reply; with candour and benevolence to love us, even though quick-sighted to our failings. But should the tongue of calumny attack us, then is even the gentlest spirit roused to put the slanderer to shame; and should there be unhappily any truth in the accusation, the eloquence of candour and

affection so changes its aspect, that, instead of the deformity of an error, it appears, perhaps, but the slight shade of an amiable weakness. There must also be disinterested attention to our happiness and success; promoting it in opposition to selfish feelings, and making every exertion which circumstances admit. The divine sentiment will awaken new energy in the mind, and prompt it to a bolder and more extensive range of exertion than mere prudence would produce. And can there be a prouder moment to a benevolent being, than when such endeavours are successful; or a more delightful feeling than when the object of such solicitude is found worthy of it, and grateful for the efforts that have been made? A generous friend will not, indeed, expect this gratitude to express itself in words, which may flow most easily from the heart that is slightly affected. Such feelings swim on the surface of the mind; those that sink deeper, are of more value, and less easily manifested. They appear in the glad, but softened beam of the eye; arising from affection chastened by a sense of obligation, yet animated by the consciousness of inspiring the love that occasioned it; and in a thousand unequivocal acts of kindness, which only a mind thus impressed can conceive, yet far more gratifying than any expression which eloquence itself could devise.

But how wounding is an opposite effect of favours bestowed: when, instead of gratitude, they produce alienation; and, while we intend to draw closer the cords of affection, we perceive them to be snapt—the being we rested on, forsaking us; and the kind look changed into the scowl of suspicion and estrangement! I fear, this is no ideal picture. Gratitude is the rarest of all the virtues, arising probably from its opposition to the pride and self-love inherent in our nature. Hence the general remark, that we feel more affection for those whom we cherish and protect, than for those to whom we are under obligations. It is natural, however, for a man that has felt a warm interest in the fate of another, and exerted himself to the utmost in promoting his fortunes, to expect a similar zeal to be exercised in his behalf, should he be so situated as to require it. What, then, must be his dismay and astonishment, should he find the very man on whom he relied not only cold and inactive, but positively opposed to his interest? This is surely one of the greatest trials of candour and benevolence; and he that does not complain nor resent it, is indeed a philanthropist.

There is a certain suavity of deportment, that often misleads the unwary. It is a mere display of an elegant address, and an amiable complaisance: regarded only as a graceful ornament by those that understand its meaning, but deceiving

the man of a warm and ingenuous nature, and of unsuspecting confidence, who depends upon it. It vanishes on a near approach: discovering the heart it had veiled to be false and unfeeling, incapable of any generous attachment to an individual, but holding out to all a pleasing, yet delusive attraction. It is well, so long as no important expectation is formed from men of this character; but how serious the consequences to a mind of simplicity and enthusiasm, that relies on their professions, and finds them all unfruitful! When the lively hope is mingled with anticipated gratitude, should the overflowing tide of sanguine and generous emotion be suddenly checked by disappointment, are we to wonder that it should recoil on the heart, and stagnate into misanthropy and despondence.—The votary of friendship has yet another lesson to learn,—that self-interest is its greatest enemy. All become apostates, less or more, from the influence of this power; though it is only by experience that the generous mind is convinced of this truth.

Edward Montgomery was a fellow-student and distant relation of Charles Falconer, the son and heir of a wealthy Baronet. The young men became much attached to each other. Edward, though the junior by some years, had made greater progress in his education; for he had the stimulus of necessity, and the laudable desire to promote the happiness of a widowed mother, and to contribute to the fortune of several infant sisters. He had a considerable talent for the acquisition of languages, and had made the eastern his particular study; but, indeed, he excelled in every branch of science, and was of great use in assisting Charles; who aspired to all the honours of literature, though averse to the labour which is necessary to their attainment. The aim of Charles was to dazzle; that of Edward, to excel and be useful, by the application of his acquirements. The result was such as might have been expected. The time of their separation drew nigh: Charles was to finish his education at Oxford, and Edward to remain in Edinburgh, till circumstances or choice should determine his future destination. It was often the subject of conversation at Mrs. Montgomery's fireside: when her anxieties were somewhat soothed by the kind professions and liberal promises of Charles; for she knew his father had great influence. Edward had a desire to go to India, and his skill in the eastern languages held out a strong temptation to this choice: but his mother warmly opposed it; and he was unwilling to leave her without a companion, or his sisters without a protector; while the slow progress of acquiring independence, as a cadet, scarcely seemed a sufficient inducement for such a sacrifice. When these objections were

suggested, Charles used to talk of his friend going out in the law department: Edward's eyes would sparkle with hope; and Mrs. Montgomery, shaking her head, reply—"Yes, that might perhaps reconcile me to his departure; but we have no right to expect so advantageous a situation."—"Never fear, Madam," said Charles, with apparent zeal, "my father's interest with Mr. M——, the Director, will procure that for my friend, and his own relation." Flattered by these promises, Edward pursued his studies with increased ardour; and, in every letter he received from Charles, was more encouraged to perseverance. At last, when his studies were finished with brilliant success, he requested Charles to make application to his father. The answer was propitious: the Baronet was to see the Director in a few days, and he had not the smallest doubt of a favourable answer. Mrs. Montgomery was reconciled to the thought of her son's absence, by sanguine hopes of his good fortune, the promise of frequent letters, and an early return. His sisters were soothed by the indulgence of golden dreams: and the pangs of separation were almost subdued,—when the final letter was received. But what was Edward's astonishment, on being informed that another gentleman, of superior pretensions, and more highly recommended, had gained the Director's interest! The intelligence was followed by some awkward and constrained expressions of regret. Edward was entirely overwhelmed by this unexpected turn, which the humiliation that accompanied it rendered still more severe; yet faithful himself, he suspected not treachery in his friend, till, some time after, he understood that the successful rival was a very stupid young man, but son to a proprietor of great consequence, who had a vote in a county for which Charles had offered himself as representative. The whole business was now explained: and it is difficult to say, whether disappointed ambition or wounded friendship affected him most deeply.

For some time, he remained in a state of listless despondency, unable to form any plan for the future. His mother, afflicted to see his fine talents and high acquirements lying dormant, yet unwilling to urge him to exertion, could only sooth him by her sympathy; but, roused at last by her gentle forbearance, he became impatient of inactivity; and no situation more eligible incurring, he was induced to accept of a cadetship in India. How different was the anticipation of his departure now! Grief and apprehension overshadowed every countenance; no sanguine expectation gilded the prospect; a longer absence, and a situation of greater danger, appeared in gloomy perspective.

He arrived safely at Calcutta, passed his trials with great

eclat; and, soon after, was engaged in the siege of Seringapatam, from which, alas! he never returned. The afflicted mother felt her widowed state still more forlorn—the helpless orphans lost a second father, and his faithless friend failed in the object for which he had sacrificed his integrity.

Another great trial of friendship, is a change of situation from that in which it was first formed.—Constantia and Matilda, at an early age, were neighbours in the country, and conceived the warmest affection for each other. They were constant companions. In walking, reading, and working, every little plan of rural amusement, contrived by the one or the other, was for their mutual enjoyment; every day that they were separated, was considered as lost; and a note, full of the breathings of tender regret, was conveyed, as a compensation for the privation. Their time passed in the most innocent and delightful intercourse; the moral page was perused with greater interest by Constantia, if Matilda pointed out its beauties; and she discovered a brighter charm in the poet's verse, if recited by the animated voice of her friend. Every object in nature was beheld with increased admiration; the evening sun set more gloriously, and the song of the thrush was more soothing to the ear, if participated by both. The most perfect confidence subsisted between them: they would pass hours in an interchange of thought, each mind expanding from the sympathy of the other—

When the longest summer's day
Seem'd too, too much in haste; still the full heart
Had not imparted half. 'Twas happiness
Too exquisite to last.

Constantia was an only child, and her father abounded in lately acquired wealth. The father of Matilda was a gentleman whose estate, though small and encumbered, had descended from a line of respectable ancestors; and she was the eldest of several children. The old gentlemen were as good neighbours as could be expected from their different situations, and the friendship of the daughters formed a bond of union betwixt the mothers. A man of engaging manners and large fortune paid his addresses to Constantia, and was accepted. Her beloved friend was her confident and bride's-maid. The young couple set off for London, immediately after the wedding. The absence of Constantia was sincerely mourned by Matilda, and she could only be cheered by kind and frequent letters. A greater evil, however, awaited her—in a few months she lost her father; his affairs were so involved, that his heirs were obliged to sell his estate; and the father of Constantia became the purchaser. Matilda and her mother repaired to a small house in Edinburgh. The following winter Constantia spent there; and, on her arrival, made a visit to her

friend. Their hearts were still attached to each other; and their first interview was very affecting. They both had sorrows: Constantia was not happy in her marriage; and Matilda lamented the death of a father, and the reduced state of an amiable mother. But there was no sympathy in their feelings. Constantia, in wealth and splendour, apparently an object of envy and admiration, yet sighing for the calm delights she had once enjoyed, still courted the society of her friend; Matilda, in comparative poverty and retirement, felt disposed rather to avoid the gay parties of Constantia, and rejected her advances. She complained of this conduct, and called it estrangement; and, though she languished to repose her sorrows in that bosom she once had found so open to receive them, she had too delicate a sense of propriety to expose a husband's errors; and pride forbade Matilda to complain of the humiliations of poverty to a favoured child of fortune. Thus, though they sometimes met, their conversation was constrained, and friendship was no more.

Marriage, in every case, is considered as the grave of female friendship. New duties and new cares occupy the mind; and confidence, the great bond of union, is excluded. Nor is this all. An attached wife naturally adopts her husband's opinions; and if those of her friend be opposite, she appears to her less amiable. She could bear to have her own disputed; but his are *law*.—Clara and Eliza were very intimate, and similar in taste and sentiment. Clara married a respectable man, who was an enthusiast in music, a high Tory, proud of his ancestors, and chose to reside in an old family mansion. Eliza paid her an early visit—she had no taste for music; was even of opinion that excellence in it implied a deficiency in other accomplishments; she had imbibed from her father Whig principles; and, though a young woman, from reading the newspapers to him, was a little of a politician. She hated the country, especially in an old family mansion, and despised the pride of ancestry; nor did she hesitate to amuse herself with some satirical remarks on the subject, which the master of the house did not much relish. He spoke of a female politician with disgust, and of a wit with dislike; and passed the evenings in improving his wife's skill in music. There was scarcely a subject of common interest: and Eliza had not even the reviving pleasure of an argument. He was too grave for repartee, and too polite to dispute with a young lady. She, therefore, looked upon her friend as immured in a prison; with no society but the family pictures, and a husband for a jailer, that tried to bewilder her senses with the “magic of sweet sounds.” She very rashly expressed these sentiments, in the language of sympathy. Clara, laughing, declared that

these arrangements were her own choice. It was easy to perceive that their friendship was on the wane. No one can bear to be pitied for any peculiarities of an esteemed object, or any privations of which they are the cause.

To imbue two minds with mutual friendship, it is often supposed that perfect congeniality of taste and sentiment is necessary. Yet we frequently see great intimacy without it: though perhaps this might be better termed companionship. If this distinction were attended to, we should not hear so many complaints of faithless friends.—Two young people, of different tempers, are accidentally brought together: the one is all vivacity and frankness, her imagination lively, her feelings warm, and she utters every thought as soon as it is conceived—the other is gentle in manner, kind in aspect, and listens with complacency to all the effusions of her companion, who is delighted by her attention, finds her self-love flattered, and expresses all the warmth of an enthusiastic friendship. They separate; and the ardent visionary meets another more similar to herself, to whom she feels a second and a still warmer attachment. Yet still when she thinks of her earliest associate, who received the first inspirations of her youthful fancy, it is with a glow of delight. They meet again: the one is all kindness, as before; but the other has heard of a rival, and her colder and more sedate mind is not so easily roused. She, therefore, receives the romantic girl with reserve and reproach, which she is unconscious of deserving. Mutual disgust is the consequence: though both have acted consistently with their character, and the disappointment has arisen from want of discernment and experience.

The great and universal destroyer of mutual confidence, is rivalry—the chief subject of which in woman, is love. Yet even on this tender point, there are noble instances of the most generous sacrifices, and the gentlest forbearance; of which that great master of nature, our immortal Shakespeare, has given us a fine picture in the character of Helena. Who can read her pathetic appeal to Hermia, without the tenderest sympathy?

Is all the counsels that we two have shared,
The sister's vows, the hours that we have spent,
When we have chid the hasty-footed time
For parting us—oh! and is all forgot?

The same high authority has given an instance of disinterested female friendship, with regard to fortune, in the generous attachment of Celia to Rosalind; and, though the amiable virtues of the former are obscured by the more dazzling attractions of the latter, it is impossible to contemplate her conduct, and listen to the tender overflowings of her gentle heart, without a glow of admiration.

Every mind susceptible of strong emotions, and benevolent affections, is disposed to friendship; yet these are not sufficient to produce it. They may, indeed, form the germ; but sincerity, candour, and constancy, alone can cherish the plant, and preserve it from injury. The blasts of misfortune are not always most dangerous; the sunshine of prosperity is often more hurtful. Friendship is of a very tender nature; and, like some delicate flowers, thrives best in the shade. Who of a sympathetic nature is not ready to exclaim—

O for the bright complexion, cordial warmth,
And elevating spirit of a friend,
For twenty summers ripening by my side,
All feculence of falsehood long thrown down,
All social virtues rising in the soul!

YOUNG.

But to obtain, and still more to preserve this blessing, much delicacy and attention to feeling is necessary. All warmth of altercation must be avoided; for, though argument is the spirit of conversation, it must be pursued with candour and politeness. Expressions may be inadvertently used in the keenness of dispute, that touch some tender strings in the mind, of which he who utters them is little aware. Opposite opinions, in mere matters of taste, are unavoidable; and the discussion of them gives a zest to the intercourse of friendship; but dissimilarity of principle is death. In the great and important subjects of politics, morality, and religion, there must be unity of sentiment, else there can be no close communion of soul. Even moderation in the two latter seems to imply indifference; their sincere votaries condemn all forbearance; and it is with anguish of heart, that they perceive any dereliction of important principles in those they once loved, and whom, if they remain obstinate in error, they can love no more.

Though Politics are less interesting; yet how often do they produce alienation!—Henry Seymour, a young Englishman, came to Edinburgh to study medicine, where he cultivated great intimacy with George Campbell. The connexion proved most agreeable to Seymour; for, accustomed to domestic society, he missed its comforts; and in the house of Campbell's father, a hospitable old Highlander, he found a second home. Professional studies, literature, and science, in which they both took great delight, occupied their thoughts, and were the subject of their conversation; while politics were seldom alluded to. Their mutual esteem thus seemed to deserve the name of friendship. Two years of uninterrupted harmony cemented the bond; and they parted with expressions of lasting regard. Seymour went to London, to finish his medical education: and after a few years, it was also

George's fate to settle there. The friendship and society of his dear Seymour presented themselves as the only consolation for the loss of his former associates. Seymour received him with the utmost warmth and cordiality. Their first conversation was delightful in the extreme: and next day George dined at old Seymour's with a large party, when politics were the subject of discussion, and when he discovered that the sentiments of his friend were opposite to his own. But, being of a candid disposition, he was unwilling to dispute on the subject, till he found that the same toleration would not be granted to himself. And how was his regret increased when he saw that every principle of morality, every subject of taste, was in some degree influenced by these opinions; that neither the historian's page, nor the poet's verse, could escape the lash of political prejudice! He continued to seek the company of his once esteemed Seymour; but the harmony of friendship had vanished for ever.

Thus we find that almost every friendship formed by choice or accident, is liable to interruption or decay! How much, then, ought family attachment to be cherished, which is most consonant both to our happiness and our duty. How delightful is the friendship of brothers and sisters, whose principles and taste are nurtured in the same soil, and cherished by the sunbeams of paternal care; while the ties of nature are rendered still more endearing by the choice of reason, and no jarring interest intervenes to destroy their influence!

THE COTTAGE OF FRIENDSHIP.

WHILE I stray by the stream, at the hour of the gloaming,
Where the bushes are green, and the wild-roses blooming,
Where the soft little billows the margins are laving,
Neath the boughs of the wild-wood all silently waving—

Oh! let me not think that the soul always loses
The object on which it most fondly reposes:
Some hearts have been faithful—as mine shall be ever—
And those yet may meet who shall separate never.

Such bliss shall be mine—to my soul shall be given
All it looks for on earth, from the kindness of heaven
In mine ear the sweet notes of content shall be swelling,
And peace, love, and friendship, inhabit my dwelling.

The friend of my youth, and the wanderer weary,
Shall call at my cottage, and find it full cheery;
Their cares shall depart, and affection grow stronger,
And the staff of the stranger shall rest a while longer.

R.